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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1568525X-12342510>

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-159885>

Journal Article

Accepted Version

Originally published at:

Martin, Gunther (2019). A Dialogic Soliloquy? On Polyxena's Conversational Behaviour in E. Hec. 415-422. *Mnemosyne*, 72(1):12-23.

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Gunther Martin

A Dialogic Soliloquy? On Polyxena's Conversational Behaviour in E. Hec. 415-422

Mnemosyne 72, 2019, 12–23

Abstract

In Euripides' *Hecuba*, both the scholia and modern interpreters detect a failure of communication in the farewell scene between the protagonist and Polyxena—though the scholiast names Polyxena as the source of the non-dialogue, whereas the modern commentators claim that neither character is engaging. This paper aims, firstly, by a slight redistribution of lines, to restore coherence to the dialogue. Secondly, it argues that it is Hecuba's rather than Polyxena's conversational behaviour that impedes the smooth progress of the dialogue. Polyxena is even the one trying to reintegrate her mother into the dialogue. Her linguistic behaviour thus matches her composed and 'heroic' overall conduct.

In Euripides' *Hecuba*, the final conversation between the protagonist and her daughter Polyxena, who is about to be sacrificed to Achilles, starts as follows (lines 415-422):¹

Πο. ὦ μήτερ ὦ τεκοῦσ', ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω. 414

Εκ. ὦ θύγατερ, ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν. 415

Πο. ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος ὦν μ' ἐχρῆν τυχεῖν. 416

Εκ. οἰκτρὰ σύ, τέκνον, ἀθλία δ' ἐγὼ γυνή. 417

Πο. ἐκεῖ δ' ἐν Ἄϊδου κείσομαι χωρίς σέθεν. 418

Εκ. οἴμοι· τί δρᾶσω; ποῖ τελευτήσω βίον; 419

Πο. δούλη θανοῦμαι, πατρός οὖσ' ἐλευθέρου. 420

Εκ. ἡμεῖς δὲ πεντήκοντά γ' ἄμμοροι τέκνων. 421

Πο. τί σοι πρὸς Ἑκτορ' ἢ γέροντ' εἶπω πόσιν; 422

Ρο. Oh mother, oh you who have born me, I shall leave you and go down.

He. Oh daughter, I, in turn, shall live as a slave.

Ρο. (I am) without marriage, without a marriage song, which I ought to have received.

He. You are pitiful, child, and I am a miserable woman.

Ρο. Down there in Hades I shall lie without you.

He. Woe! What am I to do? How am I to end my life?

Ρο. I am going to die as a slave, born of a free father.

He. But I am without fifty children.

Ρο. What do you want me to tell Hector or your old husband?

"[E]ach woman, hitherto so responsive to the other, turns to the contemplation of her own fate", writes Justina Gregory about this dialogue. Kjeld Matthiessen in his commentary agrees that Polyxena and Hecuba do not have a true conversation but that they "nebeneinander her reden, ohne aufeinander Bezug zu nehmen".²

Both commentators back up their analysis by reference to schol. A on line 414,³ which runs: ἡ δὲ Πολυξένη πρὸς ταῦτα οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη, ἀλλ' ἔχεται τῶν αὐτῆς λόγων, κὰν ἀμοιβαῖοι φαίνωνται οἱ στίχοι. οὕτως γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀκολουθία τούτων, ὦ μήτερ, ὦ τεκοῦσα, ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω

ἄνυμφος, ἀνυμέναιος ἄνευ τῶν ἐπὶ γάμῳ λεγομένων ὕμνων, ἐκεῖ δ' ἐν Ἄϊδου κείσομαι χωρίς σέθεν, ἀντὶ τοῦ σοῦ. διὰ μέσου δὲ ἐβόα Ἑκάβη ἐκείνης λαλούσης, ὅπως ἀποκριθῇ καὶ εἴπῃ αὐτῇ τι, καὶ οὐκ ἀντεῖπεν αὐτῇ μέχρι τοῦ στίχου τοῦ λεγοντος Τί σοι πρὸς Ἑκτορ' ἢ γέροντ' εἶπω πόσιν;

Polyxena did not answer to this but sticks with her own train of thoughts [*i.e.* she gives one single, continuous 'speech'], even though the lines look as if they were amoebaeic [or 'responsive']. The sequence of these thoughts is as follows: Mother, you who bore me, I shall descend unwed, unsung—[*i.e.*] not having heard the marriage song. There in Hades I shall lie without you (using σέθεν instead of σοῦ). While she is talking, Hecuba calls out in between, so that she [Polyxena] answer and say something to her, but she did not reply until the line that runs: "What do you want me to tell Hector or your old husband?"

One will note that the scholion does not quite say what Gregory and Matthiessen want it to, but that it speaks only of Polyxena refusing to engage in a conversation.

My aim here is to question not only the modern analysis but also the scholion's. I shall propose a small rearrangement of the lines, which, I hope, will produce a more coherent text. Furthermore, I should like to reconsider what makes the conversation seem stalled—whether it is indeed Polyxena who stands in the way of a two-way conversation—and to offer a very brief analysis of the course of the communication in this passage.

The value of the scholion as evidence for the original text being the same as in the medieval manuscripts is not too high. It is clear that the lines in the text of Euripides must have been swapped before the annotation was first made, as the paraphrase in schol. A 414 presupposes the transmitted order. Even so, there were almost hundred years before the alleged production of a state copy of Euripides' plays at the order of the politician Lycurgus, and well over hundred years between the composition of the play and the earliest and most important sources of the scholia, the Hellenistic scholars Didymus and Dionysius.⁴ This would already afford enough time for such a corruption to occur. However, the remark is only extant in one manuscript, and that manuscript contains a fair amount of original Byzantine contributions.⁵ Hence, there is a good chance that this scholion too is medieval, and that the transposition of the lines need not be older than the archetype of the extant manuscripts (there are no papyri containing the passage).

James Diggle already suspected that the disintegration of the dialogue in these lines may be due not so much to the characters but to a mistake in the transmission.⁶ He proposed that lines 415-416 be moved after 420 and printed this version in his *Oxford Classical Text* from 1984:⁷

Πο. ὦ μήτερ ὦ τεκοῦσ', ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω. 414

Εκ. οἰκτρὰ σύ, τέκνον, ἀθλία δ' ἐγὼ γυνή. 417

Πο. ἐκεῖ δ' ἐν Ἄϊδου κείσομαι χωρίς σέθεν 418

Εκ. οἴμοι· τί δρᾶσω; ποῖ τελευτήσω βίον; 419

Πο. δούλη θανοῦμαι, πατρός οὖσ' ἐλευθέρου ... 420

Εκ. ὦ θύγατερ, ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν. 415

Πο. ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος ὦν μ' ἐχρῆν τυχεῖν. 416

Εκ. ἡμεῖς δὲ πεντήκοντά γ' ἄμμοροι τέκνων. 421

Πο. τί σοι πρὸς Ἑκτορ' ἢ γέροντ' εἶπω πόσιν; 422

This rearrangement has some important advantages. Firstly, 415 δουλεύσομεν and 420 δούλη come to stand next to each other, forming a cohesive tie between these two lines,⁸ as is common in stichomythia. Secondly, and even more obviously, an improvement in comparison with the paradosis, line 416 ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος ὦν μ' ἐχρῆν τυχεῖν is now picked up by ἄμμοροι τέκνων, another adjective with privative α indicating the absence of a family relation: Polyxena has lost the chance to enjoy marriage—*i.e.* the fulfilment of a woman's life. Hecuba in a neat

antithesis adds that she in turn has been deprived of the rich fruits of her married life, her fifty children.⁹

Diggle's change has received mixed reactions. In the view of those opposing it, the benefits do not offset the negative consequences. They do not accept the loss of the "typical stichomythic responson: vocative versus vocative, pitiful death versus unhappy life" (ὦ μήτηρ ὦ τεκοῦσ'—ὦ θύγατερ; ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω—ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν). Secondly, 421 ἡμεῖς δέ does not seem correct if 415-416 precede, as "the pronoun and perhaps the conjunction seem to me superfluous if 421 is meant to pick up 415".¹⁰ The most objectionable consequence of the rearrangement in terms of style is perhaps the antithesis οἰκτρά σύ, ἀθλία δ' ἐγώ in 417, which remains unexplained without 415: Hecuba has not made it clear what her own miserable state consists in, as was the case with ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν in its transmitted place.¹¹

There is, however, a way of preserving practically all the advantages of Diggle's transposition while avoiding the objections that have been brought forward: instead of moving a couplet of the stichomythia, one might consider swapping lines 416 and 420. Such a mistake is easily made by a scribe—for example if two lines (or series of lines) have been omitted and reinserted in each other's place. Examples can be found in A. *Supp.* 88-90/93-95 (corr. Westphal), *Ch.* 528/534 (corr. West), E. *Herac.* 684-686/688-690 (corr. Zuntz); I suspect another case in E. *Ion* 353-354/357-358.

The result looks as follows:

Πο. ὦ μήτηρ ὦ τεκοῦσ', ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω. 414
Εκ. ὦ θύγατερ, ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν. 415
Πο. δούλη θανοῦμαι, πατρός οὖσ' ἐλευθέρου. 420
Εκ. οἰκτρά σύ, τέκνον, ἀθλία δ' ἐγὼ γυνή. 417
Πο. ἐκεῖ δ' ἐν Ἅιδου κείσομαι χωρὶς σέθεν 418
Εκ. οἴμοι· τί δράσω; ποῖ τελευτήσω βίον; 419
Πο. ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος ὦν μ' ἐχρῆν τυχεῖν. 416
Εκ. ἡμεῖς δὲ πενήκοντά γ' ἄμμοροι τέκνων. 421
Πο. τί σοι πρὸς Ἑκτορ' ἢ γέροντ' εἴπω πόσιν; 422
Πο. Oh mother, oh you who have born me, I shall leave you and go down.
He. Oh daughter, I, in turn, shall be *in the light*, as a slave.
Πο. I am going to *die* as a slave, born of a free father.
He. You are pitiful, child, and I am a miserable woman.
Πο. Down there in Hades I shall lie without you ...
He. Woe! What am I to do? How am I to end my life?
Πο. ... without marriage, without a marriage song, which I ought to have received.
He. But I am without *fifty* children.
Πο. What do you want me to tell Hector or your old husband?

As regards the structure, 414-417 now speak of Polyxena's dying, 418-422 (or rather to 423, the answer to 422) of her being dead. The transition is marked by ἐκεῖ δ' ἐν Ἅιδου. The overall structure of the conversation thus follows the chronology.

In the arrangement here proposed, the connection between juxtaposed lines is maximised, and we might recognise a sequence of ideas, each building on the preceding line:

415: Vocative now responds to vocative, a common stichomythic device to produce cohesion, and repeated in a very similar way in 424-425.¹² The contrast that is marked by ἡμεῖς δ' is formally between netherworld and upper world. But δουλεύω adds the idea that despite being allowed to live, Hecuba is not to be envied.

420: Diggle restored the connection between 415 and 420, but Polyxena mentioned her slave status without real motivation. Now the sequence is reversed. Hecuba has brought up her servitude to highlight the hardness of her own fate, but it is countered by Polyxena, who reminds the mother that despite her distinguished pedigree she has not been spared the same humiliation.

417: The line works well if Polyxena has just responded to Hecuba's point about being a slave: Hecuba summarises and acknowledges Polyxena's misery, though not without insisting on her own plight. One may reconstruct the meaning of that utterance in the way that Hecuba does not yield her implied claim (415) that she has the bitterer lot. Polyxena is οἰκτρά because she dies, but her pain will soon be over; she herself is ἀθλία (and, by implication, also worthy of pity), since *her* suffering continues. By contrast, if Polyxena had raised a new issue (being ἄνυμφος etc. in the transmitted order), the antithesis would remain unmotivated.

418: There is, in all three proposed versions, a budding tension, with no obvious connection to Hecuba's words. However, after the preceding remarks one may wish to see this as redressing the slight tension that has arisen, as Polyxena and Hecuba have each emphasised their own suffering. By touching on the pain of being χωρὶς σέθεν, Polyxena stresses her bond with her mother and the value Hecuba has for her, thus bridging the emotional gap that has hitherto separated the two.

419: Hecuba's οἴμοι confirms the horror of their separation, and she wonders how she is to end it: what she expresses is the wish for her own death. She does not think about what will happen to her in the rest of her life (that would be the potential), but how she ought to die, i.e. how to speed up her own death (deliberative subjunctives).

416: This is Polyxena's only line which, admittedly, does not continue or answer any remark or implication made by Hecuba. But I would argue that this is true irrespective of where the line is placed, due to the nature of Hecuba's preceding utterance—I shall come back to this point later. Instead of responding, Polyxena prolongs her own sentence from 418,¹³ which had not required a continuation. The connection is impeccable: with κείσομαι ... ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος Polyxena describes how she will lie in Hades, deprived of the chance to marry. She thus dispenses with the common image that she will be married *to* Hades, but her point is very closely paralleled in GVI 1668 4-5 (= MAMA X App. I 186, 31; Tiberiopolis, 1st/2nd c. ad):¹⁴ οὐ γάμον, οὐχ ὕμναιον ἰδὼν, οὐ νόμια λέ[κ]τρα, | κείμαι.

421: Hecuba takes ἄνυμφος ἀνυμέναιος in isolation, as in a nominal sentence,¹⁵ and juxtaposes πενήκοντά γ' ἄμμοροι τέκνων, resuming the idea of loss. The emphasis lent by the particle γε to the number could signify 'and now (with you) it is fifty children I have lost', stressing the number as such—but this may seem less plausible, as the figure is problematic (and Polydorus is not yet known to be dead). Instead, it could mark an implicit contrast of numbers, fifty children against the one husband whom Polyxena has lost the chance of having.¹⁶ This striving to outdo Polyxena would, as we have seen, be in line with the gist of most of her utterances so far.

422: As the scholiast already notes, this transition and what follows is unproblematic: Polyxena picks up on Hecuba's reference to her dead children, whom she is soon going to join, and offers to bring a message to the most famous of them.

The rearrangement offered here achieves two things: it increases the number of semantic, especially lexical, markers that bind the utterances of Polyxena and Hecuba together, i.e. it provides cohesion. Secondly, it allows the restoration of a process of ideas: it shows that coherence exists between both speakers' contributions to the conversation (perhaps with the exception of 416, which harks back to 418). Each utterance can be described as a reaction to the preceding one: it uses material or an idea inherent in the other speaker's words. In that sense

it is a ‘real’, dynamic conversation between two speakers, not a false ἀμοιβαῖον in which the two interlocutors communicate defectively, as the scholiast suggests. The reconstruction of the coherence of this dialogue necessarily relies on implications, the cognitive operation of putting two utterances into a relation. As such it might be said to be a circular process—assuming coherence and then inferring connections not visible on the surface level—but such is the nature of all conversation, in fact of all discourse.¹⁷ What makes the reading plausible is the emergence of a consistent thread that runs through the entire conversation: Hecuba is fixated on the gravity of her own plight, while Polyxena attempts, on the one hand, to put it into perspective, and, on the other hand, to stress the bond between the two.

This analysis can be backed up by the observation that the dynamic of the conversation between the two and especially Hecuba’s verbal behaviour is similar in the rest of this dialogue (424–431): Polyxena tries to say farewell in an orderly fashion, but Hecuba will not have any of it. To the daughter’s χαῖρε she replies χαίρουσιν ἄλλοι, μητρὶ δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε—rejecting the conventional salutation and the applicability of ‘faring well’ to herself. When Polyxena assures her that Polydorus lives and will outlive her, her response is that she is dead already, thus not accepting the consolation Polyxena offers her to ease the pain of her own departure. In all this Hecuba stresses her agony, her lack of hope, and her general misery, while Polyxena—who is actually the one who is going to die—remains strong and continuously tries to help. After several fruitless attempts at soothing Hecuba she gives up: she abruptly turns to Odysseus, without any formula or indication signaling the closing of the preceding conversation, and thus breaks off the dialogue with her mother (431–432): **Εκ.** τέθηγκ’ ἔγωγε πρὶν θανεῖν κακῶν ὕπο. / **Πο.** κόμῳ, Ὀδυσσεῦ, μ’ ἀμφιθεῖς κάραι πέπλους.¹⁸

If we return to the scholion, the flawed *paradosis* no doubt made it harder to detect the thread running through the dialogue. But this is not the only reason why the scholiast got the impression that there was no two-way communication. For the mistake he makes is to assume that Polyxena follows her own line of thought and is thus responsible for the conversation being stalled. He draws attention to a feature of the dialogue that is easier to analyse by modern categories. Rather than Polyxena, I argue, it is Hecuba who impedes the flow of the dialogue. If we look at the utterances she makes, it becomes clear that they are all reactive, second acts in a conversational move, as it were, without initiating a new move:

ἡμεῖς δ’ ἐν φάει δουλεύσομεν. 415 ἡμεῖς δὲ πεντήκοντά γ’ ἄμμοροι τέκνων. 421

The double ἡμεῖς δέ signals that her turns of speaking pick up something Polyxena had said and transfer it to or compare it with her own situation. In that sense it closes the topic raised by ἄπειμι δὴ κάτω. As such it does not necessarily invite a reaction: there is nothing that intrinsically demands a response from Polyxena, i.e. opens a new conversational move. The gist of the two lines is to trump something Polyxena has said (I have to die—I can live, but as a slave; I remain unwed—I have lost my children). A reaction is not required, as Hecuba literally speaks so as to have the last word. It is rather Polyxena who, in the first case, chooses not to accept but in some sense to contradict or modify her mother’s words (420). In the second case she does break off the line of thought and ends the overarching topic, i.e. her and Hecuba’s woes (422). She deflects a conversation that—due to the closing nature of Hecuba’s trumping statement—has no obvious continuation.

Let us look at the other two lines:

οἰκτρά σό, τέκνον, ἀθλία δ’ ἐγὼ γυνή. 417 οἴμοι: τί δράσω; ποῖ τελευτήσω βίον; 419

In these lines we have to identify the speech act that is behind the syntactical guise of a statement and two questions. An obvious clue for 419 is in the interjection οἴμοι. The questions are ‘rhetorical’—not in the sense that the answer is obvious, but in that they do not require an answer: they are, not unlike οἴμοι, exclamations, expressing that she wants to act but cannot, namely that she wants to die but does not see a way to bring about her death.

An analogous reading applies to 417: the emphatic and evaluative terms οἰκτρά and ἀθλία make it clear that this is more than a factual statement. The expressive value of the sentence equals ‘How pitiful are *you*, daughter, and how miserable am *I*!’ Such linguistic behaviour is common in tragedy: one character, while reacting to another, does not work toward continuing the conversation but closes off a move without offering a clear opening act, often by an exclamation that summarises the horrors of the events and the situation mentioned in the preceding conversation.

Now, if Polyxena does not just ignore her mother’s utterances, which impede conversation, but reconnects with her and partly reintegrates her expressive language into the conversation, it underlines her consolatory effort: she does not give up and break off the contact with Hecuba—or only does so after repeated attempts and when the mother persists in her attitude of expressing her pain as if she were the greatest victim of the situation.

This analysis means a full reversal compared to the scholiast’s interpretation of the passage. Polyxena is actively engaged in prolonging and leading the conversation. Her characterisation changes accordingly: instead of lamenting in isolation, we see her trying to pull her mother out of her self-centredness; instead of a soliloquy, we find that she is the one initiating the continued conversation. She is thus not overpowered by grief, as her mother is, but she maintains herself in a state in which she takes part in the events around her, levelheaded despite her impending fate. This matches far better the attitude, mental stability and, so to speak, heroic spirit in the face of death that marked her decision to end her and Hecuba’s resistance against the Greeks’ decision to sacrifice her at Achilles’ tomb (402–404).

To sum up, the scholiast has made an interesting observation about the course of the final conversation between Polyxena and Hecuba. That observation, however, is incorrect for two reasons: because of a corruption in the text and because of a missing framework to analyse the value and function of utterances in a conversation. When Polyxena is not explicitly linking her own lines to her mother’s, she does so indirectly by refocusing and putting into perspective what Hecuba says and partly developing thoughts that were meant to be the final word on the matter.

The scholiast does not have (or ignores) the concept of coherence¹⁹ that encompasses the idea that a connection between utterances can exist even if there is no semantic link between them. He thus seems to equate the absence of cohesion with non-coherence or unconnectedness. In turn, in this instance the very avoidance of a clear connection can be read as a means to strengthen the bond between Polyxena and Hecuba: the daughter not addressing the excessive self-pity of her mother is a sign of her tact and politeness, as well as her considering her mother’s feeling. In this way it is the attempt to reintegrate Hecuba in the conversation and the contact with her surrounding, and thus, in a way, with life, which she herself is about to leave.²⁰

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Abbreviations:

GVI: Peek, W. (1955). *Griechische Vers-Inschriften, Volume I: Grab-Epigramme*. Berlin.
 MAMA: Levick, B., Mitchell, S., Potter, J., and Waelkens, M., eds., (1993). *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, Volume X: Monuments from the Upper Tembris Valley, Cotiaeum, Cadi, Synaus, Ancyra, and Tiberiopolis recorded by C.W.M. Cox, A. Cameron, and J. Cullen*. London.

Notes:

- 1 The text follows Murray 1901 = Gregory 1999 = Matthiessen 2010. Translations are my own.
- 2 Gregory 1999, *ad* 415-421, Matthiessen 2010, *ad* 415-431. Collard 1991, *ad* 414-421 actually quotes the scholion (see next paragraph), thus avoiding a similar mistake.
- 3 The text of the scholion and the manuscript siglum are those of Schwartz 1887 (modern discussion refers to the ms. as V). A digitised image is accessible at http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.909, fol. 10v.
- 4 On the history of the scholia in see Zuntz 1965, 272-275; on the scholia in this particular manuscript see Cavarzeran 2016, 37-40.
- 5 Cf. Turyn 1957, 90-91.
- 6 Diggle 1982, 315-318.
- 7 In addition to Collard 1991, Kovacs 1995 also accepts Diggle's transposition.
- 8 The terms cohesion and coherence are used here in the linguistic sense of links between units of text, in this case utterances in dialogue: cf. Halliday and Hasan 1975 (esp. 4: "The concept of cohesion is a semantic one ... Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another."—this encompasses lexical cohesion through repetition such as the vocatives, as in the present example) and Tsui 1991, 111: "in order for an utterance to form a coherent sequence with the preceding utterance, it must either fulfill the illocutionary intention of the latter, or address its pragmatic presuppositions."
- 9 As a third benefit Diggle mentions a clearer antithesis between δούλη θανοῦμαι and ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν φάει δουλεύομεν, which for him justifies the postponement of δέ after the vocative. As

he himself shows, however, there are more parallels of such a postponement without change of addressee than the one cited by Denniston 1954, 189 n. 1.

10 Both quotations from Mastronarde 1988, 157. Luigi Battezzato has very kindly sent me proofs of his forthcoming *Cambridge Green & Yellow*. He sides with Mastronarde but does not further engage with the textual problem.

11 Concerning the merits of the structure of either alternative there is also disagreement, as is to be expected, and it is difficult to develop rigid standards for this criterion. Personally, I find Collard's analysis of Diggle's sequence (1991, *ad* 414-421: "414 Polyx.: my death; 417 Hec.: my misery; 418 Polyx.: my death; 419 Hec.: my misery; 420 Polyx.: I die a slave; 415 Hec.: I live a slave; 416 Polyx.: I die unwed; 421: Hec.: I die childless") more stringent than the defense by Biehl 1997, 107 of the transmission (Polyxena thinks of her failure to be married: 416; the living mother: 418; the dead father: 420; the brother and again the husband's mother: 422).

12 Πο. ὦ στέρνα μαστοῖ θ', οἷ μ' ἐθρέψαθ' ἡδέως. / Εκ. ὦ τῆς ἀώρου θύγατερ ἀθλία τύχης.
 13 On the technique cf. Schuren 2015, 39 with an extensive list of parallels in n. 159.

14 On the *nuptiae*-motif cf. Schauer 2002, 253-254. I do not see sufficient reason to assume direct influence of Euripides' text on the epigram. However, if there were, it would practically prove that 418 originally preceded 416.

15 Such a construction is possible in Euripidean usage: Guiraud 1962, 297-304.

16 Denniston 1954, 120-121 does not distinguish these two cases but offers examples for both: e.g. Ar. *V*. 680 (emphasising the amount) against *Lys*. 589 (emphasising the contrast).

17 Cf. Sanders et al. 1992.

18 Another example of utterances by which Hecuba does not advance the conversation but seems locked in her own perspective, focused on the futility of her existence, is 765-766: Αγ. ἡ γάρ τιν' ἄλλον ἔτεκες ἢ κείνους, γόνα; / Εκ. ἀνόνητά γ', ὥς ἔουκε, τόνδ' ὃν εἰσοράϊς. There the focus of her reply is not on giving Agamemnon the information he desires but on lamenting (ἀνόνητά γ').

19 This is not to say that scholiasts (or pre-modern scholars in general) lack a sense of such phenomena: cf. e.g. schol. Gu. I. in E. *Or*. 390 (Schwartz): ἐπεὶ ὁ Μενέλαος εἶπε πρὸς τὸν Ὀρέστην ὅτι δεινὸν λεύσσεις ὀμμάτων ξηραῖς κόραις, ἀποκρινόμενος ὁ Ὀρέστης φησί, τί λέγεις; ἅπαν μου τὸ σῶμα ἀπολώλει, καὶ σὺ περὶ τῶν ὀμμάτων μου μόνον ποιῇ τὸν λόγον.

20 Research for this article was conducted with the generous support of the Swiss National Science Foundation (Project PP00P1_157444).